

Bish Thompson 1949-1958

Some weeks ago there appeared in this space an item about a lad over near Boonville who'd been dealt a heart-fracturing blow. Perhaps you recall the incident.

His mother had written me about it. The boy had worked hard and long to accumulate a modest amount of small change. This he had spent on odd bits and parts of radio equipment. He wanted to be a "ham operator." Just as he was about to master the thing and get his homemade apparatus into action, the house burned down.

So many domestic emergencies arose out of that fire there was no money in the family budget for radio parts. Other demands were of greater urgency. Things like clothing, food, shelter, furniture, minimum household equipment—little civilized niceties like that.

BUT HIS MOTHER grieved for him and his loss. He had picked berries and I don't know what all to get started. It was mighty hard on a young mind to see his sacrifice and labors go for naught. It's not so easy for a mature person to stagger under a blow like that, then muster the courage to try again. With a youngster, it's even tougher. Their callouses aren't so thick. They haven't been bootied by life many times yet.

All of this I mentioned in the article. I didn't come right out and ask for anything for this boy. But I guess I did drop some hints about as subtle as soft corns in tight shoes. Anyway, response was immediate. Some fellows here in town would investigate and see if the lad were really intent on being a ham operator or if it were a passing fancy.

That's the last I heard about the burned-out neophyte of the airwaves until yesterday. Came this in the mail:

"DEAR BISH: The enclosed is the result of your article. The Tri-State-Amateur-Radio Society of Evansville gave Verl \$60 and Paul Cast-rup of Castrup's Radio Service of Evansville gave him \$15. With this money he is now a ham! Sincerely yours, W9YZO."

Although I don't like to be overly familiar, I feel sure my correspondent won't resent being called "W9," for short. Anyway, how on earth could you pronounce his full name? Those who have at hand a directory of ham operators, of course, will look it up and find that when he's off the air he is known as John Evan Alexander, M.D.

Here is the "enclosed" that W9 referred to in his note:

"Mr. Fay Gehres, Tri-State-Amateur-Radio



THOMPSON

Helping Hand Means Much to a Boy

Soc. Dear Mr. Gehres: I want to thank the society very much for the \$75 dollars. I am building a receiver with it and if it wasn't for the money I don't know how I would have gotten one.

"I SHOULD HAVE written sooner but I wanted to wait until I had taken my novice test. I took the test last night (April 4) and Laverne (Terril) said I passed it. I copied code at 8 wpm. So I shall be on as soon as I get my receiver and transmitter built and I get my license. I think I am going on 15 meters.

"I shall write again when I get the receiver built and tell you how it works. The receiver I am building is the one described in the March QST and thanks a lot for the money. Yours truly, Verl Ambrose."

If a lot of Verl's letter was Greek to you, then you're with me. I don't understand this radio talk so good and I wouldn't know a wpm. from a QST if they came at me from both sides at once. But I do know something about boys, having in a gray and hazy past been one myself.

And I'd like to lay a wee wager that here's one laddy-buck that'll never be a serious worry to his parents or our harassed officials charged with doing something about juvenile delinquency.

Give a kid an unexpected break when he needs it the most and you've cast some gilt-edge bread on the waters. It is good to have in our town men like Dr. Alexander, Messrs. Gehres and Castrup and their society colleagues.

MEMBERS OF THE TRI-STATE Amateur Radio Society (ham operators, that is) were quick to pick up the ticket for the 14-year-old lad who lost all his radio equipment when his farm home burned. Several members called me individually to inquire about him. All agreed to check up on the lad and, if he is really serious about becoming a 'ham,' to see that he is supplied with enough radio parts, tools, gadgets and gizmos to "get him on the air."

The society meets this week and expects a report from the member who is to interview the lad and his mother.

To the Editor of The Press 1959

I have just picked up the evening Press and read Bish Thompson's article, "Helping Hand Means Much To Boy." And to the statement, "It is good to have in our town men like Dr. Alexander, Messrs. Gehres and Castrup," I would like to add "and Bish Thompson" with a hearty "Amen" to the statement.

Although our son has thanked these people for their wonderful help, I would like for all concerned to know that we, his parents, feel very grateful too. Operation Receiver Building has been underway for some time now with the help of a neighbor who is also radio minded and our boy has been trying to convert everyone he talks to into an enthusiast also. He hasn't had too much success but you would be amazed how much radio jargon a mother can add to her education in the course of two years!

By the time I get all four of my boys raised, plus three girls think how much I'll know! With the oldest daughter, it was teacher training and Bible work; with Verl, radio and each one has managed to teach Mom and Dad part of it.

Thanks again to Mr. Thompson and keep the good articles coming. We read them every day.—Mrs. Eldo Ambrose, RR 3, Boonville, Ind.

P.S. — The "radio man" of our family thinks Bish couldn't possibly have done the things he did in his letter without knowing how humorous he was to the ones who talk the jargon. He claims the first two letters W9, locate the gentleman as living in one of three states. The last three, designate the man. Also, those directories of ham operators can be a time consuming affair. I speak from experience because I entertained myself with one while Verl and Mr. Castrup went over a list of radio pieces as long as your arm. And may I say, I made a monkey of myself by going all over Boonville inquiring for current copy of 2SF. When I saw how peculiarly everyone looked at me, I began to explain to each one I asked that it was a magazine on Amateur Radio that comes out each month so they wouldn't think I was completely off my rocker.

The things we will do for our kids!

VERL RAY AMBROSE K9DTG
(1941-1988)

SON OF ELDON & FRANCIS

FIRST LISTED IN 1958
CALLBOOK.

LAST LISTED IN 1961
—POSSIBLY ILLEGIT?